

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /138 W

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R 21439Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4915

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS UNN

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PARIS 29971

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: UDR PARTY CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY. THE NOVEMBER 16-18 UDR NATIONAL CONGRESS IN NANTES ACCLAIMED JACQUES CHABAN-DELMAS DE FACTO STANDARD-BEARER OF THE GAULIST MOVEMENT (ALEXANDRE SANGUINETTE WAS APPROVED FOR TOP PARTY POST OF SECRETARY GENERAL). MICHEL DEBRE, MAURICE COUVE DE MURVILLE AND PRIME MINISTER MESSMER WERE ALSO ROUNDLY APPLAUDED BY DELEGATES IN DEMONSTRATION THAT PARTY'S HEART STILL BELONGS TO THE "HARD AND PURE GAULLISTS." IN CONTRAST, NUMEROUS REFERENCES SPEAKERS MADE TO PRESIDENT POMPIDOU, WHO DID NOT ATTEND CONGRESS, WERE GREETED WITH LUKEWARM ENTHUSIASM. FOCUS OF CONGRESS WAS ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES, AND THERE WAS

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LITTLE DISCUSSION OF FOREIGN POLICY. CHABAN-DELMAS, HOWEVER, ENDORSED PRESIDENT POMPIDOU'S CALL FOR POLITICALLY UNITED EUROPE, WHICH HE SAID COULD BEST BE ACHIEVED ALONG LINES OF "FOUCHET PLAN." UDR APPEARED UNITED AND SELF-CONFIDENT AS A PARTY BUT CONCERNED ABOUT POMPIDOU'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE THE STRONG LEADERSHIP NEEDED TO SOLVE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS FACING FRANCE.
END SUMMARY.

2. DELEGATES TO THE CONGRESS, WHICH MEETS EVERY TWO YEARS, REPRESENT DEPARTMENTAL FEDERATIONS OF THE UDR AND ARE EMPOWERED TO CONFIRM THE SELECTION OF THE PARTY'S SECRETARY GENERAL (INITIALLY PROPOSED BY THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE), TO ELECT A NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE, AND TO APPROVE RESOLUTIONS ON VARIOUS ISSUES AND PROBLEMS. ASIDE FROM THESE FORMALITIES, THE PURPOSE IS TO RENEW CONTACTS AMONG PARTY MILITANTS WHO NUMBERED ABOUT 5,000 AND THEIR LEADERS AND PERMIT THEM TO REAFFIRM THEIR DEVOTION TO THE POLITICAL HERITAGE OF GENERAL DE GAULLE. IN CONTRADT TO THE 1971 CONGRESS IN STRASBOURG, THE DELEGATES THIS YEAR APPEARED MORE UNITED, SURE OF THEMSELVES AND CONFIDENT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE PARTY. THEY SEEMED TO HAVE PUT BEHIND THEM INTERNAL DIVISIONS RESULTING FROM THE 1971-1972 SCANDALS AND, HAVING EMERGED FROM THE MARCH 1973 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WITH MORE POPULAR VOTES AND MORE ASSEMBLY SEATS THAN ANY OTHER FRENCH PARTY, TO HAVE GAINED CONFIDENCE THAT GAULLISM REPRESENTS AN ENDURING POLITICAL FORCE IN FRANCE RATHER THAN SIMPLY A SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENT TO THE GENERAL'S MEMORY.

3. CHABAN-DELMAS, MICHEL DEBRE AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, PRIME MINISTER MESSMER, DOMINATED THE ASSEMBLY, AND THEIR OPEN AND APPARENTLY SINCERE AGREEMENT ON NATIONAL AND PARTY ISSUES REINFORCED THE DLEGATES' SENSE OF UNITY. A HIGH-RANKING PARTY OFFICIAL TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER WHO ATTENDED CONGRESS THAT THE TIMING AND SUBSTANCE OF CHABAN-DELMAS' SPEECH WAS CAREFULLY STAGE-MANAGED SO THAT HE WOULD EMERGE AS THE DELEGATES' CLEAR CHOICE FOR THE PRESIDENCY IF POMPIDOU DOES NOT RUN IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS.

4. INDEED, CHABAN-DELMAS' SPEECH HAD THE RANGE AND AUTHORITY OF A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. IN BROAD OUTLINE HE PRESENTED HIS PLANS FOR A "NEW SOCIETY" BASED ON A "THIRD WAY, COMBINING THE BEST OF SOCIALIST AND CAPITALIST SYSTEMS." ON FOREIGN
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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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TAGS: PINT, FR, PINT, UDR, (MESSMER, PIERRE)
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